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WHAT IS OUR SITUATION ?

AND

WHAT OUR PROSPECTS ?

A Few Pages for Americans,

BY AN AMERICAN.

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By South-Hopkinson Esq

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WHAT IS OUR SITUATION?

Q. 16.

WHAT OUR PROSPECTS?



THE HISTORY OF THE

BRITISH MUSEUM

THE following pages were hastily thrown together in the leisure hours of four or five days. The first manuscript was sent to the press. They may therefore be deficient in arrangement, nay, sometimes fall into repetition, and have other imperfections which a revision might have corrected. Such as they are, however, they are the undisguised feelings and sentiments of

AN AMERICAN.

The following pages are devoted to a
series of letters from the author to
his friends. The first letter is dated
the 1st of January 1800. The second
is dated the 1st of February 1800.
The third is dated the 1st of March
1800. The fourth is dated the 1st
of April 1800. The fifth is dated
the 1st of May 1800. The sixth is
dated the 1st of June 1800. The
seventh is dated the 1st of July 1800.
The eighth is dated the 1st of August
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is dated the 1st of May 1807.
The ninetieth is dated the 1st
of June 1807. The hundredth
is dated the 1st of July 1807.

AN AMERICAN

*What is our situation and what
our prospects?*

IT is perhaps true that political reformation has never been effected in any great degree by Books and reasoning—Springs of a different kind move this great machine—The secret artifices of intrigue, and the boisterous clamour of Faction; the poor thirsting for wealth and the weak for power, assisted by ambition, prejudice, private revenge, personal animosities and a natural proneness to discontent and change, have the chief agency in those astonishing revolutions in the political world which have been seen in all countries and in all ages—In vain the statesman holds firmly the helm of government, and directs her through storms and tempests with wisdom and fidelity; in vain the politician writes and declaims on the course she ought to pursue, while the interests and passions of the people are excited against their labours, and drive her towards destruction. While mutiny and division rage among the crew, every measure of safety will be defeated, every exertion fail. In circumstances

like these, deplorable indeed ! there can be no prospect of remedy but by attacking the root of the disease, no hope of preservation but in correcting the source of danger. If the people are misled and deceived by the interested and criminal views of base and artful leaders, if they are blown up to rage and opposition, not by the viciousness of their own dispositions, but by the villainy of others ; if they are hurried towards ruin, not by their own madness and folly, but by the designs and exertions of those who wish to see us destroyed ; it is necessary to shew them at once the abandoned wickedness of their deceivers, and the danger of their conduct ; to retrieve them from the delirium that has distracted their senses, and recall them to a just knowledge of their true interests, and a just duty to their injured country. With this view the following pages have been written. The author has no intention to go into the long list of grievances, aggressions, insults and losses which this country has endured for years past ; to enquire how far our political relations with one country may have justified these things from another ; nor to investigate abstruse points in the laws of nations, or discuss the advantages or disadvantages of particular articles of particular treaties—**WE HAVE GOT BEYOND ALL THESE THINGS** ; they are no longer of any consequence. When our existence and Independence as a nation are in jeopardy, it is no time to dwell on particular grievances ; when we stand perhaps on our political grave, it is useless to talk about treaties—One great question should now occupy

every American mind, and absorb the attention of every American citizen—**WHAT IS OUR SITUATION, AND WHAT OUR PROSPECTS**—It is my object to take a general view of this question; to present our real situation without a minute detail of the various causes and circumstances that have brought us to it; and look toward the prospects that lie before us without an unguarded confidence or unmanly timidity.

To Americans and those who value American happiness, these pages are addressed, by an American who has never breathed any air but that of his country, who has known no habits, no interests but hers. To those among us who are stirring up sedition and strife, who pant after confusion, tumult and national ruin, I say nothing but **"REPENT"**—I mean not to argue with such men, to excite their honour or implore their compassion. It is vain to dispute with those who know they are wrong and mean to be so; it is absurd to thunder truth into the ears of those who feel its conviction and are resolved to disregard it. "They cannot be convinced who are convinced already, and it is well known that they will not be ashamed."

If "infatuation be the forerunner of destruction," a melancholy scene lies before us. We have long been the helpless victims of licentious robbery, and boundless insolence,—We have long been almost contemptible in the eyes of all the world, and felt debased at home, yet a blind, unprecedented infatuation has impelled us to kiss the hand stretched out for our destruction,

and humble ourselves before the arrogance that treads us in the dust.

The peace and safety of this country are assailed by two enemies mutually encouraged and enflaming each other. The FRENCH, who are invited to their hostility by an assurance that our Government is divided from the people, pursuing different wishes and different interests; and an INTERNAL FACTION, who finding themselves supported, by the aggression and countenance of the French, aim at nothing short of universal uproar and plunder—These then are our foes—Let us understand them to be so, and no longer contend in the dark; no longer feel ourselves wasting away, and see our property and rights wrested from our hands, without knowing against whom we should repel the outrage, or to what point to direct our defence. These, AMERICANS, are the artful insidious foes that would really divide you from your best interests, that you may the more easily become their prey; that excite vile and groundless jealousies against your Government, that being no longer supported by you, it can no longer give you protection; and that conscious the strength of America is invincible when united, seek its overthrow by disunion. Against the motives, the conduct and the views of these enemies, I shall direct my observations and call your attention.

France is our enemy,

1. In pursuance of that general system of plunder, by which she would strip and desolate every nation on earth, and accumulate the treasures of

the world in her own coffers. As long therefore as we have any thing worth taking, so long will she continue to take—Indeed I know not on what possible ground we can suppose she will desist, while she finds us an easy prey, a willing victim.

2. She is our enemy, because she has been disappointed in our conduct—From the wild enthusiasm of some people here, the wilful misrepresentations of our minister in Paris, his humiliating and unauthorized concessions, promises and deportment, and the ungenerous, absurd idea she had formed of the gratitude we owed her, she was led to believe we were ready to unite in all her projects, to lavish our blood and treasure at her command; to quarrel and fight with all the world for her alliance, and, in short, to embrace ruin in her cause. But she has found here a wise, just and firm administration, respecting alike our political obligations to all nations, and regarding our own peace and happiness as the first objects of their duty and care. While she found us favouring and assisting her as far as in safety and honour we could, as far as was consistent with the duties of neutrality, and much longer than she deserved, she was, at the same time, chagrined and enraged to find we did not put all the world, and all national honour at defiance for her sake and at her caprice, but cultivated good will, harmony and justice with all—

3. She is our enemy in pursuance of her scheme of vengeance and annihilation against Great-Britain, and in resentment at our refusal to unite in the project. The commerce of Great-Britain,

the encouragement and vigour of her manufactures, and the disposal of them at foreign markets, form the basis of her prosperity, the source of her wealth and the sinews of her strength. It is notorious that a vast proportion of her labour is consumed in the United States, and of consequence a vast proportion of her wealth is derived from us; while, on the other hand we are perhaps equally benefited by her supplies. As France has been unable to interrupt and destroy this mutual exchange of traffick and benefits, by bringing us to an open rupture with Great-Britain, she now attempts it by a piratical invasion of our neutral rights, by robbing every vessel that is at all concerned in this trade, expecting that finally its uncertainty and danger will destroy our commercial connection with Great-Britain. If there is any doubt of this, turn to the last decree recommended by the Directory, adopted by the council of Five Hundred, and now in actual operation against us. By this decree which can be considered as little less than a declaration of war, and which any nation but our own would receive as such, every vessel that has entered an English port shall not be permitted to enter any port of the Republic—every vessel, that has on board the most inconsiderable amount, not of *British property*, but of property of the merchandize or produce of Great-Britain, or any of her possessions, let it belong to American, Frenchman, or whom it may, is, together with the whole of her cargo forfeited—Thus speaks the Directory of France, that great and magnanimous nation, who is dis-

tributing the "*Rights of Man*" to all the world; who so loudly boasts of her humanity and justice, of her tenderness for her friends and terror to her enemies; who is dispensing "*Liberty and Equality*" to the injured and oppressed from the north pole to the south——If a doubt of the real views of this "terrible Republic" still remains, if the stubborn mind yet refuses conviction, and believes her faithful and abused, read and reflect on the instructions of LE BAS and VICTOR HUGUES, that arch villain, the special agents of the Executive Directory for the windward islands, to the Tribunal of Commerce; extracted from the archives of the Tribunal of Commerce established in the island of Guadaloupe. This precious extract of piracy, begins in these words——"*Several Americans have escaped our vigilance,* and that of the Tribunal of Commerce of Guadaloupe. The intention of the government is to treat them with the severity **THAT THEIR TREATY WITH OUR ENEMIES HAS DESERVED**"——Heavens! is any American any longer deceived? Do not the scales of error and prejudice in favour of an abandoned nation, which have hitherto blinded him to the outrage of her conduct, now shower from his eyes? and does he not behold her in all her deformity?——Does he not see her arms stretching themselves for universal dominion? does he not start at her countenance on fire for unbounded rapine, blood and desolation? Her eyes dart beams of malignity and carnage, her cheeks glow with the ardour of rapacity, her lips tremble in the paroxysm of rage, and her cor-

rupted heart has become the fountain of avarice, perfidy and unadulterated vice. But Victor Hugues goes on "Those whose captains and supercargos are Englishmen by birth, and naturalized since the declaration of war are to be condemned conformably to the laws"—And again "Although all the Americans clear out for Guadaloupe, the better to deceive us, those shall be declared to be good prize, which shall not be taken in the latitude hereof."—Enough, enough, there is more of it, but God knows this is enough to make every American either frantic with indignation, or sicken him with shame—If storms and tempests drive you out of the latitude of Guadaloupe, you are good prize, although your papers shew from whence you came; although *Hugues* himself may have seen you sail from his wharf, but a few hours before. If examples for such decrees and instructions are to be found they must be sought for in the annals of Piracy or the history of the Buccaneers—With the views I have already stated of accumulating plunder and destroying the British commerce, these magnanimous allies established criteria of neutrality never before heard of—they make terms of safety for us, unprecedented in the laws and usages of any civilized nation, and compliance brings no more safety than before. New terms are imposed as fast as the last are conceded, and their ingenuity is tortured to keep pace with our patience and timidity; at length when their ingenuity shall be exhausted, and our forbearance shall remain; when they find we are so stupid

that we do not, or so mean that we dare not understand their meaning, they will require, on board of each vessel, some unheard of monster, a man perhaps with one, two or a dozen heads as the passport of security and the purchase of peace. What shall we say to such conduct—An open and avowed Pirate, in a state of declared hostility with all the world, prowling over the seas for plunder, and seeking it through danger and in the very jaws of death, is a magnanimous hero, in comparison with the treacherous and rapacious system of plunder adopted by France against the defenceless merchantmen of a neutral ally—When hour by hour we are yielding point by point; relinquishing one right to day and preparing to sacrifice another to-morrow, these generous friends tread rapidly on our steps, and every new concession but opens a new demand. Rapacity grows more insolent by uninterrupted success, and timed submission invites depredation—Where will this end? What offering will gorge the appetite of plunder, or appease the rage of unresisted hostility? No *civilized* nation has ever before been guilty of such outrage and insolence, no *free* nation has ever before endured them.

But have they confined their rude and lawless deportment to our merchantmen?—Has the American honour received no deeper wound than that inflicted through our commerce assailed and unprotected? It has—Upon the recall of Mr. Monroe, a minister wise, patriotic and respectable was sent to France—Need I repeat the

mortifying disgrace of his reception and dismissal—Shall I call back the painful remembrance, of the valedictory address from Barras, the president of the Directory, to Monroe who had been displaced for misconduct and official misrepresentations and abuses of his trust, a speech fraught with the most supercilious contempt for us and our government, with menace and full blown arrogance; with a direct avowal of his belief (from whom he got it let Mr. Monroe answer) that the American people were divided from, and at enmity with their government—Infamous idea! and false as infamous, for which the caittiff that uttered it and those who schooled him, should be consigned to the detestation of every honest American. Mr. Pinckney however was not accepted by the Supreme Directory, and we were denied the right of choosing our own minister—In this situation, so difficult, so critical, and so mortifying to him as a man and as an American, he conducted himself with a dignity, a calmness and prudence, that put to shame the rudeness of his reception, and even extorted applause from the opposers of government in this country. But he was able to effect nothing. His powers were not sufficient, or his person or his politics were not agreeable—Most people were now satisfied that it was in vain to attempt to treat with this overbearing friend, that negotiation was a farce they were tired of playing, and treaties a kind of restraint they had long despised and disregarded—I believe this was the opinion of our Executive, although I belong not

to his councils, and have not even a personal acquaintance with the President. But to satisfy those who yet remained unsatisfied—to make it evident, beyond the possibility of contradiction, even by the most violent and the most vile, that nothing should be left unattempted to cultivate peace and harmony with France, in any way consistent with our national honour and independence, three commissioners were selected from different states, whose talents, moderation and patriotism are unquestionable in their own country, and sent by the President with ample powers to meet, and, if possible, appease this haughty and gigantic ally---Our eyes have been long bent towards them with anxious expectation---Long have we looked for the commencement of their negotiations and tidings of their success. Those who cherished the hope that France was not really resolved on our destruction, have fondly believed there was nothing wanted but the communications of our commissioners to satisfy us all, of the friendly and honorable intentions and dispositions of our ally. They reproached the tardiness of the winter that detained the joyful news—the invaluable communications—alas! they have arrived: I would to God the light of Heaven had never shone on these new and multiplied records of our dishonour--Week after week, and month after month, have these gentlemen been dancing at the heels of a scoundrel, whose soul is as deformed as his body, and whose carcase would long since have been given to the dogs by his precious republicans, had he not

found a refuge and protection in this country--- Who was fed, pampered and courted by those whose ruin he now pants for--- When we saw this Bishop of Autun, this Talleyrand Perigord, this minister of foreign relations, crawling along our streets and regaling at our tables, could it have been believed he was the destined persecutor of America, the future agent of insult and violence--- Yes--- it might have been believed, and let it be remembered--- Let it serve at once as a reproof and a check upon that incautiousness, with which we so freely receive these fugitive foreigners, these wandering mendicants to our tables and our hearts--- But to turn from this disgusting object, and return to our commissioners. Their humiliation, the humiliation of our country has been in vain--- the prostrate suppliant has been spurned, the proffer of peace and friendship, rejected--- What remains? Hear the manly language of the President in his message relative to these communications---

Gentlemen of the Senate, and

Gentlemen of the House of Representatives,

The dispatches, from the Envoys Extraordinary of the United States to the French Republic, which were mentioned, in my message, to both Houses of Congress, of the fifth instant, have been examined and maturely considered.

While I feel a satisfaction in informing you, that their exertions, for the adjustment of the differences, between the two nations, have been sincere and unremitted, it is incumbent on me,

to declare, that I perceive no ground of expectation, that the objects of their mission, can be accomplished, on terms compatible, with the safety, honor, or the essential interests of the nation.

This result, cannot with justice be attributed, to any want of moderation on the part of this Government, or to any indisposition to forego secondary interests for the preservation of Peace. Knowing it to be my duty, and believing it to be your wish, as well as that of the great body of the people, to avoid by all reasonable concessions any participation in the contentions of Europe, the powers vested in our envoys, were commensurate with a liberal and pacific policy, and that high confidence, which might justly be reposed in the abilities patriotism and integrity of the characters to whom, the negotiation was committed. After a careful review of the whole subject, with the aid of all the information I have received, I can discern nothing, which could have insured, or contributed to, success, that has been omitted on my part, and nothing further which can be attempted, consistently with maxims, for which our country has contended, at every hazard, and which constitute the basis, of our national sovereignty.

Under these circumstances I cannot forbear to reiterate the recommendations, which have been formerly made, and to exhort you, to adopt with promptitude, decision and unanimity, such measures as the ample resources of the country afford, for the protection of our seafaring and com-

mercial citizens ; for the defence of any exposed portions of our territory ; for replenishing our Arsenals, establishing Foundries and military manufactures ; and to provide such efficient revenue, as will be necessary to defray extraordinary expences and supply the deficiencies, which may be occasioned by depredations on our commerce.

The present state of things, is so essentially different, from that, in which instructions were given to collectors to restrain vessels of the United States from sailing in an armed condition, that the principle, on which those orders were issued, has ceased to exist. I therefore deem it proper to inform Congress, that I no longer conceive myself justifiable in continuing them, unless in particular cases, where there may be reasonable ground of suspicion, that such vessels are intended to be employed contrary to law.

In all your proceedings, it will be important to manifest a zeal, vigor and concert in defence of the national rights, proportioned to the danger, with which they are threatened.

JOHN ADAMS.

United States, }
19 March, 1798. }

Having stated enough of the motives, conduct and views of France to satisfy every American interested for the safety and honour of his country, that she is an inveterate, relentless and insatiable foe to our peace and prosperity ; that she seeks to humble, divide and destroy us, and

that, of consequence, every effort of defence which the resources of our country furnish, should be instantly and strenuously exerted against her, I will in the same cursory manner, examine the character, conduct and views of her great auxiliary, her real ally, the INTERNAL FACTION that distracts the councils and measures of our Government.

The great source of all our political evils and misfortunes, the fountain from which defamation, falsehood and sedition have so plenteously flowed, is the facility with which foreigners acquire the full and perfect rights of citizenship—Many of them, driven from their native land by the dread of offended laws, the exigencies of pinching want, or the *impatience of ambitious insignificance*, have directed their course to this country, invited by the wide range which our political *commons* offered to their hopes of distinction and the restlessness of their talents. Having been long confined within the limits of an active and vigilant police, and under the restraints of energetic government, they break loose with unbounded licence, and in shaking off the shackles of their former condition, spurn at the most wholesome subordination—Any government, and all laws are now too tyrannical for these new-born sons of liberty—Their free spirits can suffer no restraint—They consider the bolts and bars that secure their neighbour's property—the fence that encloses his land, and the very walls that form his house, as encroachments upon their *natural rights*; as a prostration of LIBERTY and EQUALITY.

With such reasons for emigration, and such destructive dispositions, it may safely be asserted, that, generally speaking, none but the most vile and worthless, none but the idle and discontented, the disorderly and the wicked, have so inundated upon us from Europe. The industrious mechanic who comes here to find a more ample employment for his labour, and exercise for his skill,—the merchant who transports with himself all his stock in trade and all his hopes of wealth and success—The man of science who sits himself quietly down in the contemplation of his studies, or the diffusion of his knowledge, I greet as brothers, and would encourage as Americans. They will have an interest in our happiness, because their own depends upon it,—they will struggle for our preservation, because we must perish together. But the abandoned vagabond, who is destitute of all the arts of industry, who comes here in search of *political preferment*; and strikes at his object by vilifying the government we have made with the best talents and patriotism of our country, and the administration we have chosen by the free suffrage of the people; who clamours about the rights of property, without possessing a shilling, and runs mad about Liberty, without understanding what it means; who would correct the danger of the times by exciting rebellion; who would compose the distraction of the people by universal confusion, and teach them their interests by the introduction of treason and distrust—this is the wretch, and thousands of such wretches are

among us, who should be viewed with horror and crushed with indignation, who, if not soon driven from all influence in our affairs, may enflame and corrupt the whole mass of the people. We hold our liberties and government, we hold that independence which has been seized through difficulty and danger, and purchased with the lives of our fathers, the best blood of our country, at a cheap, a vile price indeed, when it is shared with an infamous vagrant, if he will condescend to reside but a few months among us, although he is employed this time in debasing our country, violating our government, and vilifying with rancour and falsehood, those whose services and virtues we have been taught to respect, and whose persons we love---This is the price of Citizenship---This the rate at which we value our dignity and importance as a nation---Let it be recollected that this species of Foreigners are flowing rapidly in upon us---Those that yet remain behind will be encouraged by the success, and hastened by the exhortations of those that are here---At length the administration of our government, and the enacting of our laws will be wrested from our hands, and we shall become the dependents on those whom our charity now supports---our generosity protects, and our easy confidence strengthens and arms for our destruction. If some check is not applied to their enormous and growing influence, the day of their triumph is not far distant---The time approaches when the American knee shall bend before the foot-stool of foreigners, and the dear-

est rights and interests of our country await on their nod. I doubt not there is at this moment, at least, fifteen or twenty thousand, probably many more, naturalized Frenchmen in this country, who are using and confusing the United States for mere temporary and interested views, and who will depart or remain, as the change of times and circumstances shall render most convenient or profitable. If there are this many Frenchmen, the hosts of emigrants from other nations, with views more dangerous and wicked than those stated are almost innumerable.

It is notorious that the bulk of the opposition to our government, and far the greater part of the domestic faction that rages among us is composed of these fortune-hunting foreigners. Their principles spread like the leaven of unrighteousness; the weak, the ignorant and the needy are thrown into a ferment, and corruption threatens the whole mass—Turbulence and disquiet readily communicate their uneasiness, and thousands are betrayed in honest simplicity.—“He that contradicts established truths will always have an audience; he that vilifies established authority will always find abettors.”—The important crisis of the times; the astonishing and rapid events that have agitated the minds of mankind and convulsed all Europe to its center, the unsettled revolutionary state of things in a great part of the world; the danger and uncertainty of our situation, and the difficulty of self-preservation even with our best efforts—while they distract the public mind and terrify the judg-

ment, afford these disciples of rebellion and confusion an unusual collection of political topics, on which to excite hope, to astonish fear, to allure ambition and avarice, to alarm suspicion and encourage discontent—It is well known they have not neglected their advantages; and their success must have surpassed their hopes. The indolence and inactivity of those who deprecate their measures, and ought to be their opposers, have given a confidence to their exertions, and a splendour to their triumphs, that should make every American blush at his criminal supineness, tremble when he reflects on its consequences, and resolve to save his country while yet it is not too late—Let us no longer be satisfied with offering lazy and fruitless wishes for the safety of our government, while it is struggling in the deadly gripe of faction, and sinking under the activity and perseverance of the foe—To refuse to arrest the arm that aims a deadly blow is not perhaps to become a murderer, but the difference between the man that strikes and he that permits it, is not worth contending about. When our country is betrayed and desolated, shall we console ourselves with believing that we are not the traitors, or shall we sink under the horrid consciousness, that we saw her falling and withheld our support, that she was torn before our eyes by the hands of ruffians, and we were patient spectators of her sufferings, that she cried for help, and no help was nigh—We shall recollect in shame and confusion, that we have been accessory to her ruin, and that an effort would have saved what

is gone forever—Let the friends of government act with consistency, system and unanimity, let them feel and exercise the strength and influence they really possess; let them imitate their adversaries in the concert of their measures, the ardour of their spirit, and the perseverance of their exertions—Let them come forward in the dignity of superior virtue, and the confidence of irresistible strength, and the victory must be decidedly their own. But if their *vis inertia* is immovable, if no considerations of honour, safety or patriotism can arouse them from the drowsy lethargy that consumes them, we are lost indeed, and a dismal and melancholy prospect is presented to ourselves, our children and our country; and the sooner we are wrapt in ruin, the better. Anxiety will then cease, and all apprehension and care be lost in the bosom of despair.—We shall then be wretched, undisturbed by hope; and contemptible, without the uneasiness of pride—Having lost all character we may be careless of our conduct, and being dismantled of all property, we shall have no concern about our estates—Heaven avert the day, but my soul shudders to contemplate it:

“ For now we stand, as one upon a rock,
 “ Inviron’d with a wilderness of sea,
 “ Who marks the waxing tide grow, wave by wave;
 “ Expecting ever when some envious surge
 “ Will in his brinish bowels swallow him.”—

But if unerring vengeance is a comfort to the injured, we shall not be comfortless—Go on heli-
 sh faction—Let your desires expand their wid-

est wings, soar high, and spread damps and darkness upon us—Be bloated with success, and let your gorged stomachs burst with blood—Even in your prosperity you shall meet with punishment, and the very success of your crimes shall be their avenger. Read this awful lesson to the wicked, let it sink deep into your hearts, and appal the frenzy of triumph—

“ But in these cases,
 “ We still have judgment *here*, that we but teach
 “ *Bloody instructions*; which being taught, return
 “ To plague the inventor. Even-handed justice
 “ Returns the ingredients of our poison'd chalice
 “ To our own lips.”——

But I hope and trust in God, the hour of despair is not yet arrived. There is a spirit in the American people that disdains dishonorable submission, and will resent unprovoked insult. The cause of order and good government is daily progressing—The influence of truth is spreading, and virtue seals the work—Error is rapidly diminishing by conviction, and falsehood by detection. The American people are awaking from slumbers of insecurity and dreams of deceptions, and rally round their government—Our antagonists meet with few proselytes in this country, while the most respectable of their adherents constantly drop off—They depend for recruits on the annual supplies of imported patriots which they receive from England, Ireland and Scotland—They watch eagerly from the wharves for the gangs of discontented and factious emigrants that flock in from all parts of the world, and catch

them eagerly to their fraternal embraces, lest the first sentiment imbibed on touching our shore should be a sentiment of order and subordination—They look for the spring and fall vessels with the same anxious impatience with which the Spaniard waits for the arrival of his galleons.

The opposition to government has in all countries, ever been remarkable for zeal, activity and perseverance. A conviction of one falsehood does not abash them from the experiment of a second; defeat but stimulates enterprize, and difficulty gives stubbornness to perseverance.—“Animated under the name of zeal by the natural malignity of the mean against the great,” conscious that no change in the state of things can alter their condition for the worse,—can make them more wretched or more contemptible than they are, nothing can damp the ardour of their exertions, or depress the extravagance of their hopes—Perhaps these characteristics were never more strongly marked than in the conduct of the *Levellers* in this country—Mere *misrepresentation* is too weak an engine of deception for the malignity of their malice, and the wickedness of their views—Simply to censure and reproach government is beneath the haughtiness of their designs—Private reputation is attacked with the most virulent defamation, as “baseless as the fabric of a vision,”—a lie is thrown into the world although confutation treads on its heels; criminal accusations are boldly ventured, although the next moment exposes their falsehood—Even the public acts of the government, the votes of the

legislature, notorious and unequivocal as they are, undergo some distortion under the press of the Aurora, and are misrepresented or belied. And these things have their use—Some poor ignorant creature, is caught in the net, and the means of disentanglement may never reach him. And if this should not be the case; if now and then a shaft is shot in vain, they heed it not—Their stock is not greatly diminished, the source of slander is never exhausted, and their industry is not discouraged. In a valuable work, entitled "*Athenian Letters*" it is said, "at Athens the magistrates are distinguished more by being virulently abused than by any mark of authority." Is not this most emphatically and most lamentably the case in the United States—While the constitution has wisely and effectually given the people every security against their officers, so that even the most perfidious and profligate can hardly do much mischief without detection and punishment, the laws afford the most virtuous, wise and faithful in the discharge of their public trusts, no special protection against the most vile and abandoned defamation. Surely while the misconduct of public officers is open to public investigation and censure, the wretch that abuses this privilege, to pull down and disgrace the vigilant and faithful, to violate the sanctuary of private character, and prostrate the peace and happiness of innocence and worth, should be given over to some dreadful punishment, some signal vengeance.—Even WASHINGTON, the noblest fabric of humanity that ever came from the

hands of the creator—even his name, fairest on the list of mortals, the ornament and saviour of his country, has not withered the tongue of slander or abashed the half-averted eye of envy—But the attack served only to expose the rancorous malignity of the foe. He stands like a column fixed in the center of the earth; against which the storm beats in vain, and whose adamantine polish resists even the point of the chisel—He can neither be moved or defaced.

To such a pitch has political defamation arrived in this country, that to give a man an office is to set him up as a mark for every black-guard to spit at—When his appointment is published, it is the notice and signal of attack—Torrents of abuse pour in from all quarters, and hundreds contribute their aid who know nothing about the man or his conduct—Modest merit shrinks from situations so exposed, and few men feel resolute enough in their own integrity to brave such filthy dangers. This is a part of the system of Jacobinism in this country, to drive all good men and every friend of the government from the administration, that every thing may lay open to the ravage of its enemies. When it was in contemplation to raise the salaries of some of the officers of government, a famous leader of the opposition in Congress, had the unprincipled effrontery to declare—No, we will not give a single farthing; we will, if possible, take from them what they have, until they shall be *starved* out of office; and when we get our own men in, we will shew that we know how to pay

them. This is the regard which a Jacobin has for an oath of office—this is the purity and impartiality with which they discharge their public trusts, and a specimen of the patriotism and justice of the motives which direct their votes on public measures.—

While the individuals attached to and concerned in the administration of the government, are incessantly assailed by all the efforts of inveterate malice and groveling envy, the government itself shares in the honour which the enmity of such foes affords. The outcry is first raised by some purse-hunting villain, some disgraced fugitive, or, it may be, some infamous convict, who has eluded the care of his keepers and escaped the stroke of justice. The alarm is caught by the weak, and spread by the foolish. Terror seizes on all ranks, and men carry fearful faces, without any precise idea of the danger they dread. Consternation is a contagious disease, and none escape but the few, the very few who are wise enough to think for themselves, and resolute enough to trust their own decisions. One frantic madman may bawl FIRE ! at midnight, and disturb the peace and fears of a whole city—one furious Jacobin, alarm a whole country with ridiculous fears of the government. Boldness of assertion and vigour of attack, hurry with them numbers who will not stand to inquire whether the one be not false and the other destructive.

Believe me, Americans, the object of this faction is not to correct the abuses of govern-

ment or defend your liberties: Your government despises such monitors and you need no such defenders. They imagine and fabricate abuses that they may appear as the watchmen of your liberties—they roar about encroachments on your rights, that they be looked up to as their guardians and vindicators; But although they would deceive you, they are not themselves deceived—they feel the vileness of their conduct, they understand the tendency of their measures, and the darkness of their views. It is the overthrow of your government and constitution, it is the disorder and ruin of your country, it is your annihilation as a nation they seek. Their object cannot be mistaken—a deceptive success that allures them to their fall, has so emboldened their effrontery, that in the extravagant riot of democratic triumph, the mask sometimes tumbles from their visages and exposes their horrid deformity. Their object is the same with that of the midnight ruffian who fires a city that he may plunder in the midst of the conflagration, and rob the poor creatures of that little which the flames might spare. They excite general tumult and distress to fatten on the miserable, seize on their deserted possessions and wallow in their wealth. In times of peace and general prosperity, industry and honesty are the surest means of acquiring property, and property thus acquired may be enjoyed in security; Fraud however vigilant, and rapine however resolute, find few opportunities of enterprize in such a happy state of things; but, when a coun-

try is thrown into disorder and confusion, when the minds of men are distracted with great events and great dangers, when the peaceful are driven from their walks of retirement, and the industrious from their course of labor, when the care of private property and an attention to selfish interests are absorbed in the fate and existence of the whole nation, then it is that a rich harvest rises to the hopes of the freebooter, and unbounded scenes of success are opened. Then without fear he riots in ill-gotten possessions, wrests from the hands of honesty the accumulated profits of years of labour, reaps where he has not sown, and spreads universal devastation. Americans ! trust not such wretches, when they tell you they seek the honor and safety of your country as the security of your rights. It is to disgrace and prostrate the one, and annihilate the other, they strive with unremitting exertion. As the hatred and attacks of the faction are against the government and its administration, our prosperity, in any shape must increase their rage and disappointment, inasmuch as it strengthens that government and gives confidence to that administration. Whether prudence and weakness require submission to foreign insult and rapine, or whether honor and safety call loudly on us to repel unprovoked insolence and defend unalienable rights, are questions they never discuss, and are entirely beside their pursuit. A disgraceful peace or a disastrous war will equally gratify their wishes ; while to be secure and honorable in the one, or successful

in the other, will blast their projects against the government, and disappoint their hopes of separating it from the people. To obstruct the measures of government in order to produce miscarriage, to drive it into expedients that promise disgrace, and cripple the hands of the administration, that they may afterwards expose its weakness, are the steady purposes to which every wish, every enquiry and every exertion of this infernal faction are unremittingly bent. Some sinistrous accident, some unforeseen misfortune, under which the wisest and strongest might fall, would be a joyful triumph; our complete overthrow, their wish'd-for victory. To embarrass every system of defence, to intimidate and vilify all who oppose unconditional submission to France, and even to betray those counsels which might lead to success, are the outlines of the *duty* which these wretches profess to owe to their country—are the means by which they would justify our rights and secure our liberties. Our enemies and our dangers are now before us—they press upon us, and every hour is precious. Let the great question then be quickly answered—WHAT IS TO BE DONE? The storm approaches towards *all*, let *all* then prepare to repel it; the ruin will be *common*, *common* be the defence. In a situation so alarming, a situation which comes unexpectedly on many, though by many it has been long foreseen, the public mind will necessarily be distracted, some variety of opinion will prevail even among our friends. But there is no time

to hesitate; we must decide and we must act quickly; or decision and action will be vain. Let us seize on the measures that are most energetic and most effective—Some talk of an EMBARGO—What is this but a weak confession of cowardice—a paltry and momentary refuge from danger—a slothful and ineffectual measure of defence, an indiscriminate stroke of distress at friend and foe, citizen and foreigner, rich and poor; a plentiful source of discontent and rebellion, as idleness and distress are the most productive roots of mischief and crimes; we shall become the prey of each other, and the poor being thrown out of all employment and raging for bread, will despoil their more wealthy neighbours of their surplus. The produce of the farmer will rot in his barns—The mechanic will drop his useless implements, and industry sicken with sloth—The American strength will become enfeebled and relaxed—Closely confined at home, and eating and drinking in idleness, we shall sink into a state of sickly torpor, and languishing disease—Ruin will be the inevitable consequence of such a state: We shall soon witness, and with a morbid indifference too, a prostration of our independent spirit, a mean and habitual servility of disposition, an aversion to action and exertion; and, in short, all the diseases by which indolence and sloth destroy the natural body, will consume the political—We shall die in dishonour and rot in infamy—If we should ever dare to crawl out again from our skulking holes, it will be with the feeble,

tottering step of a man just emerging from years of close confinement without wholesome air, exercise or diet—We shall be daily strolling about our streets with vacant countenance and lounging stride—Not even the question of “*what news?*” will be heard; for we shall be struck from the lists of nations—become a blank; be concerned about nothing that passes in the world, nor have any body to be concerned for us or our fate—All business being at an end, we shall have nothing to do, but eat, drink, sleep and rot in sloth and idleness—Every arm unnerved, every mental talent dormant: Like those unhappy lands of fiction, where the baneful wand of some malicious magician, has wrapt the people in an everlasting sleep, and fixed them in impenetrable marble. The noisy hum of industry will be no more heard among us—the hammer rests on the anvil, and the axe lies rusting in the earth—Commerce being assassinated at a blow, the revenues and resources that spring from her will fail at once—Taxes the most odious and oppressive must then be resorted to supply the current expences of the government; while the means of paying any tax whatever in any possible shape, are entirely cut off—

Some talk of *treating*—With whom? With lawless barbarians, who murder the innocent and enslave the free? With insatiable robbers, who plunder alike from the rich and the poor, from the enemy and the ally? Whose system is a system of universal desolation,—whose exi-

stence is supported by blood, and who consider the breach of treaties as a national right, and an excellence in perfidy as a national virtue. Yes, unhappy America! thou hast in thy bosom, ever in the bosom of thy councils, some, who, if Buonaparte, that prince of high-waymen, should plant his blood-stained standard in the center of the hall of Congress, would be timid enough to talk of *treating* under his banners—some, who would be vile enough to propose submission, perhaps, to hail him welcome—Americans! disregard—despise, spurn at the counsils of such men—Act worthily of the great character you have earned by your virtues, your constancy in difficulty, and your courage in danger—ARM and defend yourselves, while you have yet something to be defended. But armament will lead to open war—Be it so, and we shall then know on what ground we stand: We can then regulate the war in some measure; so as best to suit our situation and interests; whereas now we are its helpless, undefended victims. By arming our merchantmen and furnishing such convoys as we may be able to provide, we shall at least save some of our commerce, we shall at least be protected from those paltry piccaroons and privateers which have been the chief depredators on our trade. We shall not have the mortification to see our property torn away, and our ruin effected by a force we despise—If we are destined to fall, let it be with the exertion and spirit of men,—Let us not become despicable, if we are to be un-

fortunate—Let not the sneers of contempt canker the wounds of misfortune. Since the strongest desires of peace evinced by the most unequivocal proofs, witnessed by the most unexampled patience, has not been able to preserve us in security, we must prepare to meet war with fortitude and energy—Whether we will be at war or at peace is a question we have not been permitted to decide—The French have decided it for us. Can we be so infatuated as to believe we are now in a state of peace—No—We are in a state of war, of war of the worst kind—of a war of attack without a defence—of a war that is gradually wasting our wealth—exhausting our strength, and treacherously sowing divisions and jealousies among us,—a war of dishonour, insolence and rapine submitted to without resentment or repulsion,—Nay, with shameless tameness, and apathy. We make apologies for our aggressors, which they are ashamed to make for themselves; we seek explanations which they reject with scorn, we offer humiliating terms of conciliation which they spurn at with contempt, we cherish hopes of reformation which their growing outrage renders ridiculous. As we are in a state of actual war, so we are labouring under the enormous expense of a war of the kind described. Are the millions that annually pass under the mockery of trial and adjudication in French courts, no expence*?

* It is astonishing to hear the *expence* of war so often urged, and by well meaning people too, against our taking any measures of self preservation—shall we be destroyed, because we will not incur the expence of defence. For my own part, if it is necessary

Are the numbers of poor Americans, the ruined crews of condemned vessels, the living witnesses of our pusillanimity and shame, smarting under the tyranny of French discipline, and wandering and perishing through their islands in abject want, no loss to our country? No evidence that at this moment we suffer all that we can suffer from the most unfortunate war, and infinitely more than we need expect from a regular and energetic *system of defence*. Is the daily and encroaching ruin of our merchants, who drop off one by one in calamitous succession, sinking from opulence to beggary, are the gaols crowded with hundreds who were dependent on the prosperity of those merchants, no evidences that a deadly effort is exerted against us---Yes, they are melancholy proofs. -It is true there is a great proportion of our citizens whom these calamities have not yet reached, but they approach with rapid step, they pervade the whole country with a certain and unimpeded progress. The war waged on us by France is not merely and eventually a war of depredation, although its external appearance at this time bespeaks it such---It is also a war of conquest, and they are at this moment overrunning us with intrigue,

I should give one half of all I have to save the other, I shall not hesitate to do so---If more is requisite, more shall be given; and if finally, I must give up all to preserve my life and liberty, all shall be freely given. The true wealth of a nation consists in its independence and security, and not in accumulating gold to lie in useless heaps, or enrich the triumph of a savage conqueror---At a time when half the world is racked in dire convulsions, when immense countries are desolated and powerful nations extirpated, if we escape with *expence* only, we may deem ourselves very fortunate.

artifice and faction, as rapidly, as destructively and almost as certainly as they did Germany with their arms.

Come then my Countrymen, let us, at once lift the shield of defence, and swear to stand or fall by our sacred rights—They were bought with blood and danger; and in danger they must be asserted and protected with blood—To hesitate, is to be lost, is to engender fear and distrust, and animate the foe; a further indulgence in ease and indolence, a longer acquiescence under unexampled tyranny and insolence may be fatal—It will debase the national character—train us to the manners and habits of slaves,—prostrate every manly, generous and independent sentiment, and render us familiar with subjection—When the human mind is once contaminated with the habits of meanness and servility—When its dignity is lost and its energy destroyed, when it has been long taught to view a foreign nation or a domestic despot as the supreme arbiter of its fate and guide of its actions, whose mandates are irresistible, and whose vengeance would be fatal, it at length sinks into a stupid acquiescence in its condition, and implicitly adopts the enervating, the base, the deplorable belief that the evil is without remedy, that every effort against oppression would be vain, and resistance but add to calamity. The spirit of freedom once extinct can seldom be re-animated. Thus it is that millions upon millions of men are ruled and driven with a rod of iron often wielded by the hand of im-

potence—Thus it is that some petty tyrant strong in nothing but cruelty, powerful only in the fears and debasement of the herd he lashes, tramples upon hosts of men, either of whom, if conscious of his strength, could strike the vile cartiff to the earth, and offer his heart an acceptable sacrifice to Liberty—How is it that a child with a broken reed shall drive before him an hundred oxen, and make them tremble at his voice? Is it because his strength is irresistible and their submission of necessity? No—it is because they have been reared in the habits of subjection, have never known the importance of their own power, or the weakness of their adversary, have been used to crouch when their master stormed, and patiently receive the lash, as a punishment for disobedience or a gratification to his cruelty or caprice. So AMERICANS will it be with you if you once admit a foreign master and surrender your rights and your strength into his hands—Let us rise with one voice, with one heart and with united exertion to avert this dreadful event—Confident in the justice and truth of our cause, we have been careless about defending it—Feeling the purity of our patriotism, we have suffered it to sleep in dull inactivity—Conscious that *we* would not injure our country, we have not been suspicious enough of others, and have not yet come forward in her defence, because blind to the danger—Our dullness and inactivity has indeed been astonishing—While our country is torn with foes within and without, while foreigners at

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home and abroad bully our government with insolent language and menacing conduct, embarrassing every wholesome measure, and distracting the minds of the people with groundless jealousy and seditious discontent, vilifying those whom we ought to honour, and falsely accusing those who deserve our trust, the AMERICAN sits still, gazing at the fatal scene in stupid indifference or inactive commiseration—He sits at ease at home, wishing well to his country, and reproaching those who would injure her, and is utterly unconscious or regardless of the storm that gathers to rouse him from his lethargy “like a rattling peal of thunder,” and awake him to all the horrors of sudden ruin. Some pursue their usual avocation of gain with as much gaiety and eagerness as if their country was in a state of profound security and uninterrupted prosperity—They add heap to heap rejoicing in the fruits of their labour, and reflect not that their honest earning may be scattered by the hands of ruffians; that they cannot be safe while their country is in danger. ROUSE then from this disgraceful and fatal indolence—Let every friend of his country come forth and shew himself in this, the hour of danger—Let every selfish pursuit, every sordid view be for a while suspended or forgot, and every exertion be vigorously and solely bent to the public weal, the preservation of our country—Let the AMERICAN SPIRIT stand forth in its native dignity and strength, and let it be seen that it “IS NOT DEAD BUT SLEEPETH.”

